

Saguache-Upper Rio Grande Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)

February 23, 2021 Meeting notes

In a scheduled meeting, members of the Saguache Upper Rio Grande(S-URG) Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) met with the intent to review project proposals for recommending Secure Rural Schools Act (SRS) Title II funds.

Process and decision related items are noted in bold text.

Attendance:

Designated Federal Official (DFO): Martha Williamson; RAC Coordinator: Gregg Goodland

RAC Members: Emma Reesor (RAC Chair), Dave Jones, Randy McClure, Lynn Rutland, Jason Anderson, Cassandra Doyon (also designated proxy for Michael Maez), Julie Mach, Don Thompson, Sandra Wagner, Tom Tichy

Guests and presenters: Kristy Borchers, Carolyn Brown, Earl Robinson, Andrea Jones, Tristram Post Patrick Ortiz, Judy Lange, Mick Daniels, Peter May, Kim Wheeler (zoom meeting host)

Around 1:40 pm, Lynn McNitt from Hinsdale County briefly joined group 1.

Meeting kick-off

RAC coordinator Gregg Goodland welcomed everyone and coordinated introductions.

All determine a RAC quorum existed.

Emma Reesor called the meeting to order at 8:45am

Update on consolidation with Rocky Mountain RAC

Martha Williamson updated members on the S-URG RAC consolidation. Forest Supervisor, Dan Dallas, sent a letter to the Regional Forester requesting that the S-URG RAC be combined with the Rocky Mtn. RAC. Request for nominations to the Rocky Mtn. RAC should be advertised soon and will be sent out to all S-URG RAC committee members, in case anyone is interested.

Martha called for a show of members hands on who would like to stay on as part of a local “project filter” group, after the transition to the Rocky Mtn. RAC. Emma Reesor, Jason Anderson, Dave Jones, Sandra Wagner, Randy McClure, Tom Tichy, and Don Thompson raised their hands.

Jason motioned that the list of people above, form a local committee that will review projects prior to them being submitted to the Rocky Mtn. RAC. Sandra seconded the motion for the above group. None opposed, so the motion passed.

Business

Gregg provided a status of available funds. Anticipating that 2020 funds will become available soon, so he recommended that the group move forward with those funds in mind. This meeting will serve to recommend projects using all available funds from FY 2013 thru FY 2019, and FY 2020 when they become available.

Martha reviewed purpose of RAC and stated that the intended end state of the session is to have all the submitted projects prioritized to expend all past funding and any additional funding that may come in. Martha explained a process to use for project review (see PowerPoint slide addendum).

RAC members asked about whether project proponents are in good standing and if monitoring of projects is occurring and identifying a need for that to happen into the future. It was determined that if past performance was an issue, forest service contacts would not support new project submissions.

Motion for proponents to provide a project report, FS to confirm project was completed satisfactorily prior to subsequent round of funding requests. Tom makes this motion. Sandra seconded for purpose of discussion.

Sandra advised that the RAC charter states each RAC shall monitor projects that have been approved under the SRS Act and advise the designated Federal Official on the progress of the monitoring efforts. (SRS RAC Overview) has not been done previously. Through the previous motion, the RAC intends to implement this duty.

Additional monitoring process

- For repeat applicants – assessment of their previous work should make the proposal a go/no-go for consideration.
- Martha added this last item to the project review/scoring sheet.

None opposed, so the motion passed.

Project review sessions

Members were divided into two breakout groups for discussion since there weren't adequate category representatives to cover all projects on a by-county basis.

Project proponents waited in the main room until groups invited them to present.

Recommendation from Group #1

Breakout Group #1 of the RAC moved to make the following recommendation to the larger group:

- Fund the projects as stated in the spreadsheet.
- \$903 unspent from Rio Grande County will be applied to the Alamosa Silver Mtn. project for a total of \$30,062.00 with the agreement that \$903.00 worth of work will be applied to the Rio Grande County portion of the Comstock Trail.

Reconvene Full RAC

Thomas motioned to accept funding allocation spreadsheet as is per populated by groups 1 and 2. Sandra second. None opposed, so the motion passed.

Project Funding Stipulations

If additional funds become available in **Conejos County**, projects will be additionally funded in the following order and up to these total amounts:

1. Conejos Peak Travel Infrastructure: Up to \$10,500
2. Alamosa Comstock Trail Project: Up to \$38,300.00
3. Horca Erosion Project: Up to \$25,540.00

If additional funds become available in **Rio Grande County**

- If at least \$10,000.00 – fund the Rio Grande Airport fuel tank
- If under \$10,000 – fund Alamosa Comstock Trail Project with work in Rio Grande County

If additional funds become available in **Hinsdale County**

- Fund OHV Education

If additional funds become available in **Saguache County**

1. 41G project: Up to \$59,293.00 and secondarily,
2. Moon Pass Corral: Up to \$15,000.00.

If additional funding is received **beyond the above requests**

- FS discretion to fund proposed RAC projects keeping county priorities in mind.

Sandra made a motion to move forward with additional funding as stated above and Dave seconded. Nobody opposed, so the motion passed.

RAC members were thanked for their service.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 pm.

Addendum – Project review process

Suggested process for getting to final project recommendations

- Goal
 - Maximize effectiveness of this final RAC session
 - Prioritize all projects
 - Recommend projects beyond current funding available
 - Focus on process to allocate excess and additional funding
- Determine if any projects DO NOT meet SRS criteria
 - Eliminate these
- Evaluate remaining projects
- Prioritize within county
 - End state: Saguache projects 1-xx; Hinsdale projects 1-xx; Conejos projects 1-xx; Rio Grande projects 1-xx.
- Apply funding
 - First: within county
 - Second: if there is county funding in excess of project requests, pool to fund greater project list